Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraphs [0008] and [0020] with the following amended paragraphs [0008] and [0020] :

[0008] In one aspect of the invention there is provided a ceramic article having a composition comprising u (Al_2O_3-TiO_2) + v (R) + w ($3Al_2O_3$-$2SiO_2$) + x (Al_2O_3) + y (SiO_2) + z ($1.1SrO$-$1.5Al_2O_3$-$13.6SiO_2$-TiO_2) + a (Fe_2O_3-TiO_2) + b (MgO-$2TiO_2$), where, R is SrO-Al_2O_3-$2SiO_2$ or $11.2SrO$-$10.9Al_2O_3$-$24.1SiO_2$-TiO_2, where u, v, w, x, y, z, a and b are weight fractions of each component such that (u+v+w+x+y+z+a+b=1), and ~~0.5 <u≤ 0.95, 0.01 <v≤ 0.5, 0.01 <w≤ 0.5, 0 <x≤ 0.5, 0 <y≤ 0.1, 0 <z≤ 0.5, 0 <a≤ 0.3, and 0 <b≤ 0.3~~. 0.5 <u≤ 0.95, 0.01 <v≤ 0.5, 0.01 <w≤ 0.5, 0 ≤x≤ 0.5, 0 ≤y≤ 0.1, 0 ≤z≤ 0.5, 0 <a≤ 0.3, and 0 ≤b≤ 0.3. Phases of aluminum titanate ($Al_2O_3 \cdot TiO_2$), strontium feldspar ($SrO \cdot Al_2O_3 \cdot 2SiO_2$), mullite ($3Al_2O_3 \cdot 2SiO_2$), alumina ($Al_2O_3$), and/or glass have been observed by x-ray diffraction, and electron-probe micro-analysis in the inventive ceramic. These phases are not required to be perfectly stoichiometric, or crystalline in the final product.

[0020] The invention provides an aluminum titanate-based ceramic comprising u (Al_2O_3-TiO_2) + v (R) + w ($3Al_2O_3$-$2SiO_2$) + x (Al_2O_3) + y (SiO_2) + z ($1.1SrO$-$1.5Al_2O_3$-$13.6SiO_2$-TiO_2) + a (Fe_2O_3-TiO_2) + b (MgO-$2TiO_2$), where, R is SrO-Al_2O_3-$2SiO_2$ or $11.2SrO$-$10.9Al_2O_3$-$24.1SiO_2$-TiO_2, where u, v, w, x, y, z, a and b are weight fractions of each component such that (u+v+w+x+y+z+a+b=1), and ~~0.5 <u≤ 0.95, 0.01 <v≤ 0.5, 0.01 <w≤ 0.5, 0 <x≤ 0.5, 0 <y≤ 0.1, 0 <z≤ 0.5, 0 <a≤ 0.3, and 0 <b≤ 0.3~~ 0.5 <u≤ 0.95, 0.01 <v≤ 0.5, 0.01 <w≤ 0.5, 0 ≤x≤ 0.5, 0 ≤y≤ 0.1, 0 ≤z≤ 0.5, 0 <a≤ 0.3, and 0 ≤b≤ 0.3.